



Department of Energy  
Washington, D.C. 20545

Hal Hollister, Dir., OES

HEARINGS - HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES, MAY 22, 1978

At the April 12, 1978, Hearing of the Committee, questions were raised about the possible need for moving the Bikini people from Bikini Island. We were directed by the Chairman to return and report on the results of the then ongoing whole body counting of the Bikini people and the status of information on Eneu Island as a possible site for relocating them. The Department of the Interior representative was directed to report on plans for relocating the Bikini people if the measurements showed that continued living on Bikini Island would result in the people exceeding the Federal standards.

The Committee was primarily concerned with the DOI plans for resettlement of the people. Mrs. Van Cleve and Mr. Winkel proposed to move the people from Bikini Atoll to one of several places with the final choice to be made after further discussion with the people now living on Bikini. DOI stated it would take 75 to 90 days to implement their plan. There were questions about the safety of leaving the people on the Atoll for that period. Dr. Weyzen gave the Committee a short discussion about added cancer risk which he estimated to be one every 10 years.

The Committee asked who set the federal standards. I responded that the Federal Radiation Council developed the basic standards we are using and that with the demise of the AEC this responsibility was transferred to EPA. They asked about occupational standards and about the fact that they are higher than the general public standards. I responded that presumably the people know that working with radiation entailed some risk which was considered to be acceptable. They asked why the people continued to eat coconuts and Mr. Oscar deBrum, District Administrator for the Marshall Islands, noted that the people treasure coconuts and offer coconut milk, etc., to visitors. He said the only way to prevent them from using coconuts was to remove the trees or move the people. They asked for a list of the names of the AEC Ad Hoc Committee who evaluated radiological hazards at Bikini Atoll and for a copy of their report. Mrs. Van Cleve said she had a copy there and would supply it to the Committee.

Enclosed are statements by Mrs. Van Cleve, Director, Office of Trust Territory; Mr. Adrian P. Winkel, High Commissioner of the Trust Territory and the Magistrate of the Kili Council, as well as copies of the vugraphs which were used to report on the monitoring data and status of Eneu.

Enclosures:  
As stated

Enclosures:	RC 326
As stated	Collection L. Joe Deal
	Box 13
	Folder Marshall Islands Jan-June 1978

Joe Deal, ADFO

*[Signature]*

*OK, Joe - I think this is a useful and valuable record, & your time & effort - will be repaid in full. Thanks AS/24*

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May 23, 1978

STATEMENT OF MRS. RUTH G. VAN CLEVE, DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE  
OF TERRITORIAL AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE  
THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES SUBCOMMITTEE, COMMITTEE  
ON APPROPRIATIONS, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, CONCERNING  
RESETTLEMENT OF THE PEOPLE OF BIKINI, May 22, 1978

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

During our hearing on April 12, I stated the following with  
respect to the people currently living on Bikini Island:

"...eventually all of the 112 people now 139 people<sup>7</sup> living  
on Bikini Island must be moved. The time will be dictated by  
Mr. McCraw's of the Department of Energy test<sup>7</sup>/s/. If they reveal  
that there is an immediate danger, then we must move them the current  
residents of Bikini Island<sup>7</sup> forthwith. If they do not reveal that  
there is an immediate danger, then we can pause until the radiological  
surveys reveal whether the move to Eneu can be made or whether we have  
to move to a less attractive site."

As we informally advised the Committee staff last week, the  
results of the very recent tests of the body burdens of the people  
living on Bikini Island show a significant increase in such burdens.  
While it may be arguable whether the test results show "an immediate  
danger", we in the Department of the Interior are satisfied that the  
people should be moved from Bikini Island as soon as it is possible  
to do so.

We have asked the representatives of the Department of Energy  
to discuss with you the radiological situation on Bikini and its

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implications for the people on Bikini Island, and they will do so in a moment. Then the High Commissioner and I want to discuss with you our plans for the move of the people from Bikini Island.

I must tell you now, however, that we have suddenly been required to recast our preliminary plans in a very major way. The Committee will recall that when we testified before you a month ago, we anticipated, on the basis of the best information then available to us from the Department of Energy, that if it were necessary to move the people of Bikini Island to an alternative, safe site, we could expect that the nearby island of Eneu would be available for that purpose. Last Thursday we learned that tests of a limited sample of foodstuffs growing on Eneu showed an uptake of radionuclides much in excess of those predicted on the basis of the known cesium and strontium content of the soil. Accordingly, we have concluded that we must eliminate Eneu as an alternative site, and we have thus revised substantially the plans for temporary settlement. We will outline those plans to you after the Energy Department discussion of the radioactivity situation on Bikini and Eneu.

To assist us in our discussion of our relocation plans, there are present with me this morning, in addition to High Commissioner Winkel, his District Administrator for the Marshall Islands District, Oscar deBrum; three representatives of the Kili Council, Kili being, you will recall, the site to which the people of Bikini were moved

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in 1948, and where about 400 continue now to reside; their translator; Mr. Earl Gilmore, a Senior Vice President of Holmes & Narver, Inc., an engineering firm under contract to the Government of the Trust Territory, who has aided us in developing the relocation plans that we will describe; and Mr. Milner and Mr. de Young of the Office of Territorial Affairs of the Interior Department. All of them stand ready to respond to your questions. I understand the Kili Council will offer a statement.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to turn the presentation on test results over to Mr. Deal of the Department of Energy, following which I shall present a further statement.

/Department of Energy presentation/

The test results reported by the Department of Energy lead the Interior Department and the Government of the Trust Territory to two conclusions: we must move all of the current residents of Bikini Island off that island, as quickly as we are able to do so; we must not move them to Eneu, as had been the Bikinians' hope and ours. The situation may not, it has been suggested, require such immediate action, because it has been said that the tests do not reveal an immediate danger. We are, however, unwilling to assume the risk. The Department of the Interior has never knowingly assumed any risks with respect to the health and well-being of the Bikini people. We will not do so now.

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Accordingly, we have identified four islands of the Marshalls on which the current residents of Bikini could live without suffering damage as a result of radioactivity. Of those four, one is Kili, and the Kili Council will present the view that the current Bikini population should be returned to that island. While we agree that Kili represents one of the four viable options, we are not certain that it would represent the choice favored by the people now living on Bikini. In order to establish their preference, the High Commissioner will travel to Bikini, as soon as he completes his mainland business, including his appearance this week before the United Nations Trusteeship Council. He will explain to the Bikinians the relative advantages and disadvantages of the four sites, and he will learn their preference. No more than three weeks from today, we will know the result of those consultations, and we will then advise this Committee of the relocation site that has been chosen.

Permit me to emphasize that this consultation will not delay by so much as one day the actual move off of Bikini. That move will occur no later than 90 days from today, and possibly within the next 75 days.

We expect that 75 to 90 days from today, the current Bikini population will be moved into temporary houses of plywood construction, with aluminum roofs. We had earlier expected that they would first be housed in tents, but the amount of time that we would thereby save --

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a week or so -- does not warrant the use first of tents and thereafter of plywood houses. There will also by then have been erected minimal community facilities, including a church building and a school, and adequate supplies of water and sanitary facilities will be in place. We will have tents available, in case they are needed, because we had already located them in anticipation of their use, but we do not expect to need them.

If we must make judgments as to who will first be moved, we will encourage families with young children to be the first to leave Bikini. We understand that young children are the most vulnerable to the dangers that we now know exist on that island. We shall also continue a feeding program for the Bikini Island residents, once they are relocated, because we also understand that particular foods can assist in overcoming the effects which they have experienced from living on Bikini Island.

The cost of the relocation we propose -- of constructing the facilities I have described and moving the Bikini residents to them -- will approximate \$370,000. This figure will apply regardless of which of the four sites is chosen. Pending the availability on October 1, 1978, of the appropriations that we have sought during our recent hearing, we will find the \$370,000 from within our current resources. If a reprogramming of Trust Territory Government funds is required, as seems likely, we will be in communication with this Committee and its Senate

counterpart, and we will follow the established reprogramming procedure.

Lest the Committee feel concern on the question of the wisdom of our permitting the current Bikini Island residents to remain there for the foreseen 75 to 90 days, I would respond that the best advice we have been able to obtain is that they can safely do so. We are informed by Department of Energy experts that remaining 75 to 90 days longer on Bikini will not appreciably increase the risk to their physical condition.

In the interest of clarity, I must emphasize that the upcoming move may prove to be one more temporary relocation of the people of Bikini. As the High Commissioner will explain, of the four possible sites, two will surely prove to be temporary only; two others could prove to be permanent relocation sites. We will not know with certainty where the Bikinians can live on an indefinite basis until the aerial survey is complete, and that will be next January. A supplemental request for additional funds for that survey is now pending before this Committee. The survey has, however, been commenced, based upon funds earlier made available.

If it is agreeable to the Committee, the High Commissioner will now elaborate further upon the proposed move.

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STATEMENT OF TOMAKI JUDA  
MAGISTRATE OF THE KILI COUNCIL  
BEFORE THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERIOR

May 22, 1978

Mr. Chairman:

The Kili Council thanks you for this opportunity to address your Subcommittee on a matter of such importance to our people. My name is Tomaki Juda, and I am the Magistrate of the Kili Council. With me today are three other Bikinians, Nathan Note, Kessai Note and Johnny Johnson, as well as Tony deBrum, Vice Chairman of the Marshall Islands Political Status Commission, legal counsel Jonathan M. Weisgall of Covington & Burling in Washington, D.C., and legal counsel George M. Allen of Majuro, Marshall Islands.

Mr. Chairman, today marks a sad day in what is already a sad history of our people. More than 32 years ago, members of the U.S. Navy flew by seaplane to Bikini to convince the 167 people living on our atoll that they had to leave their homes, so that the U.S. could test nuclear weapons there. According to official Navy records, Commodore Wyatt spoke after a Sunday church service and "compared the Bikinians to the children of Israel whom the Lord saved from their enemy and led into the Promised Land." Commodore Wyatt told our people of the power of the atomic bomb and stated that American scientists "are trying to learn how to use it for the good of mankind and to end all world wars." The Navy said

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it had searched the entire world for the best place to test these powerful weapons and Bikini was it. Commodore Wyatt then asked the Bikinians: "Would you be willing to sacrifice your island for the welfare of all men?"

Our people deliberated, and Chief Juda reported their decision:

"If the United States government and the scientists of the world want to use our island and atoll for furthering development, which with God's blessing will result in kindness and benefit to all mankind, my people will be pleased to go elsewhere."

Within one month, our people were moved to Rongerik, an atoll 150 miles from Bikini. Rongerik unfortunately was unable to support our population, and we were forced to move first to Kwajalein and then to the island of Kili, where most of us are still living today.

Meanwhile, the United States proceeded to conduct numerous nuclear tests on the 27 islands of Bikini. In fact, today there are only 24 islands on our atoll, since the 1954 Bravo shot, the second hydrogen bomb ever tested, demolished three islands and left a circular hole in the reef one mile wide.

In 1968, we were very pleased when President Johnson announced that Bikini Atoll was safe, and he promised that we could return home. But even then, the AEC seemed to be more interested in returning our people to Bikini than surveying the islands carefully enough to determine whether it was in fact safe for us to return. For years, we asked for comprehensive tests to

measure the safety of Bikini, but we were assured all along, first by the AEC, then ERDA, and now the Department of Energy, that there were no serious radiation problems on Bikini. We did not want to return to Bikini until the U.S. had conducted tests with its most sophisticated aerial radiological survey equipment. Finally, in 1975 we filed suit in Honolulu to ask for an accurate measurement of radiation levels at Bikini and elsewhere in the Northern Marshalls in order to make a decision whether to return to Bikini.

After nearly two and one-half years of litigation, the U.S. last month finally agreed to conduct an aerial survey, but even then the agencies continued to argue among themselves, while our people suffered, over who would pay for the survey.

Over the weekend, we learned that the radiation levels of Bikini Atoll are so high that our people must once again leave Bikini. These people were moved by the U.S. to Bikini without adequate precautions and they have been exposed to dangerous levels of radiation. Our sadness today results from the fact that we believe this situation could have been avoided if a comprehensive study of the island had been conducted several years ago and if the scientists had been more realistic in their assessment of the dangers. It seems odd today that it was the Bikinians themselves who had to ask for testing and that our requests were refused. We were naive then, but our ignorance

has turned into sadness and bitterness as we see ourselves as the victims of bureaucratic incompetence.

Needless to say, serious questions concerning resettlement, compensation and long-term medical care must also be addressed as soon as possible. With Bikini Atoll no longer possible as a home, we must find some location for our people to reunite and live together. Kili Island has severe disadvantages. Unlike Bikini Atoll, with its calm lagoon and reef fishing, Kili is an island, with no lagoon and no reef, so fishing is impossible. Kili runs parallel to the northeast tradewinds, so neither side of the island is leeward, and there is thus no protection for boats. The surf created by the tradewinds from November to May isolates Kili completely, except for infrequent calm spells. As a result of all these factors, we are continually dependent on food supports from the U.S.

Mr. Chairman, we know that there are no easy solutions to the problems facing our people, and we appreciate and respect the efforts made to help us by Mrs. Van Cleve, High Commissioner Adrian Winkel, District Administrator deBrum, John deYoung of the Department of Interior and others. We have learned that mere moral obligations of the U.S. do not enjoy much support in Washington. But we must change this attitude. Mr. Chairman, recall the ironic words of Commodore Wyatt in 1946, when he compared us to the Children of Israel whom the Lord led into the Promised Land.

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We are, sadly, more akin to the Children of Israel when they left Egypt and wandered through the desert for 40 years. We left Bikini and have wandered through the ocean for 32 years, and we will never return to our Promised Land. But we hope that today's sad news can serve as a catalyst to make the Bikini problem one of top priority so that we may soon find a permanent home in the Marshalls. We need your help. Thank you.

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